

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A viscosity-sensitive system comprising a soluble fiber source and a polysaccharide.
- 5 2. The viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1 wherein soluble fiber source is selected from the group consisting of glucomannan, konjac flour and mixtures thereof.
3. The viscosity-sensitive system according to Claim 1 wherein the polysaccharide is selected from the group consisting of maltodextrin, guar gum and inulin.
- 10 4. The viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 3 wherein the DP of the polysaccharide is at least about 10.
5. The viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1 that generates an increased *in vivo* viscosity when exposed to alpha-amylase.
6. The viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1, wherein the fiber and polysaccharide  
15 are in a ratio of from about 1:3.5 to about 1:15.
7. A method for lowering blood glucose in a diabetic human by administering an effective therapeutic dose of the viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1.
8. The method according to Claim 7, wherein the viscosity-sensitive system is contained in a food product or beverage.

9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein the viscosity-sensitive system comprises at least 1 % w/w of the total carbohydrate contained within the product.
10. The method according to Claim 8, wherein the food product or beverage generates an *in vivo* viscosity when exposed to alpha amylase.
11. A method for providing nutrition to a diabetic patient comprising administering the viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1.
12. A method of incorporating soluble fiber into a low viscosity nutritional beverage comprising adding the viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1 to the beverage.
13. A method of increasing viscosity of a soluble fiber system *in vivo* comprising administering to an individual the viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1.
14. A food product or beverage, comprising protein, fat, and carbohydrate and further comprising the viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1.
15. A method of delivering soluble fiber to diabetic patients, comprising administering the food product or beverage of Claim 14.
16. A method for assisting a diabetic patient with managing their blood glucose levels, comprising administering the food product or beverage of Claim 14.
17. A viscosity-sensitive system comprising glucomannan and maltodextrin in a ratio of from about 1:3.5 to about 1:15, wherein the viscosity-sensitive system generates an increased *in vivo* viscosity exposed to alpha amylase.

18. The viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 17, wherein the glucomannan is konjac flour.
19. A method for preparing a low viscosity glucomannan composition, comprising admixing glucomannan and a viscosity lowering compound in an aqueous  
5 medium, thereby producing a low viscosity glucomannan composition.
20. The method of Claim 19, wherein the viscosity lowering compound is selected from the group consisting of: maltodextrin, hydrolyzed guar gum, inulin and combinations thereof.
21. The method of Claim 20, wherein maltodextrin has a dextrose equivalent value  
10 less than about 18.
22. The method of Claim 19, wherein the maltodextrin is present in an amount of from about 0.5% to about 20% by weight.
23. The method of Claim 19, wherein the hydrolyzed guar is present in amount from about 1% to about 20% by weight.
- 15 24. The method of Claim 19, wherein the glucomannan is konjac flour.
25. The method of Claim 24, wherein the konjac is present in an amount of from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight.
26. The method of Claim 24, wherein the konjac is present in a nutritionally beneficial amount to effect a decrease in serum cholesterol or a decrease in  
20 serum glucose levels or both.

27. A method of lowering blood glucose levels in a mammal by administering to said mammal, an effective therapeutic amount of a composition comprising glucomannan and a viscosity lowering compound in an aqueous medium.
28. A method of lowering blood cholesterol in a mammal, comprising administering to said mammal an effective amount of composition comprising glucomannan and a viscosity lowering compound in an aqueous medium.
29. A method of preparing a high viscosity food product or beverage from low viscosity food product or beverage, comprising:
- a) heating a mixture of maltodextrin and glucomannan containing food product or beverage in an aqueous medium under conditions suitable to produce a low viscosity mixture; and
  - b) hydrolyzing the maltodextrin in the glucomannan-maltodextrin composition in order to reduce the molecular weight of the maltodextrin, thereby increasing viscosity of the composition.
30. The method of Claim 29, wherein the maltodextrin has a dextrose equivalent value of less than about 18.
31. The method of Claim 29, wherein the amount of konjac is from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight.
32. The method of Claim 29, wherein enzymatic treatment or acid treatment or a combination thereof is used in step (b).
33. The method of Claim 29, wherein the enzyme is an  $\alpha$ - amylase.

34. A method of lowering blood cholesterol in an individual, comprising administering an effective therapeutic amount of the viscosity-sensitive system of Claim 1.